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Chairman:

Mr. MROZIEWICZ

(Poland)

CONTENTS

- General debate on all disarmament items (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

Mr. NANDOE (Suriname): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. Our congratulations also go to the other members of the Bureau. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank your predecessor, Ambassador Rana of Nepal, for his excellent contribution to the work of this Committee during the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

Many representatives who addressed the Committee earlier paid considerable attention to disarmament in the context of the new world order. Indeed, the end of the cold war has opened up new prospects for international cooperation which the emerging new world order symbolizes. The signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the reduction of their strategic arsenals will contribute to achieving nuclear disarmament.

The declarations by the two Presidents most recently of their intentions to destroy or reduce whole categories of nuclear weapons have been welcomed by the international community and are indeed very encouraging and promising.

However, the end of the cold war does not in itself mean the end of international conflicts, but it need not mean a return to an earlier style of international relations based on the balance of power and shifting alliances.

The post-cold-war era should mean that wars are not likely to occur within the context of a bipolar world dominated by two ideological opponents.

(Mr. Nandoe, Suriname)

We, therefore, believe that these fundamental political changes in the international political arena will direct us to a system of collective security and an international rule of law. In this context the Charter of our Organization and the instruments available under it can play a major role and gain increasing credibility.

This should imply that our Organization could exercise peacemaking and conflict control effectively if those Members that are first and foremost responsible for the maintenance of peace and security accept and consistently apply the principles articulated in the Charter of our Organization. In this regard, my delegation wishes to acknowledge the important contributions of our Organization in the field of disarmament, peace and stability. We believe that in the past our Committee has played a major role in tackling very complex items and that today's challenges can be met with confidence.

From the start of the nuclear age in 1945, enormous expenditures of ingenuity and ink have been devoted to analyses and discussions of nuclear strategy. Yet all these discussions and paperwork have produced only one plausible scenario for the use of nuclear weapons in war: a situation where there is no prospect of retaliation, either against a non-nuclear State or against one so weakly armed as to permit the user to have full confidence in his nuclear force's capacity to achieve a totally disarming first strike. We and, I think, the whole international community, therefore, are grateful for and welcome the unilateral measures announced by President Bush on 27 September and followed up by President Gorbachev.

These initiatives are encouraging and promising, but, as the representative of Nigeria said the other day, the relentless development and acquisition of increasingly sophisticated nuclear weapons in general can only

(Mr. Nandoe, Suriname)

foster a sense of insecurity and create a feeling of uneasiness among the nuclear have-nots. Therefore it is now for the other nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate some significant action towards nuclear disarmament. We, therefore, urge that a comprehensive test-ban treaty be negotiated.

As the representative of Brazil has observed, our ultimate goal should be, beyond the present ongoing negotiations, a universal and non-discriminatory convention on the prohibition of the use, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and on their destruction. In the Latin American and Caribbean region some steps have been taken. I may refer, in this respect, inter alia, to the agreement on the uses of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, signed in Guadalajara in August 1991 between Argentina and Brazil, and to the Declaration of Mendoza on chemical and biological weapons, signed by Argentina, Brazil, Chile and later Uruguay.

The Secretary-General has once again expressed his concern regarding the problem of excessive and destabilizing transfers of conventional armaments. We support the initiative for the establishment of a United Nations register for the transfer of arms and we welcome, in this respect, the study of the Secretary-General. This study contains positive elements on ways and means to promote transparency in international transfers of conventional arms on a universal and non-discriminatory basis. Clearly greater knowledge and transparency would enhance the possibilities of limiting conflict-fuelling arms trade. My delegation is of the view that, after serious study of that report and other relevant material, the establishment of a United Nations arms register could be considered, possibly on an urgent basis.

The transformation of relations between the major Powers has not only political advantages. It should provide a unique chance for the release of

(Mr. Nandoe, Suriname)

substantial resources as a result of disarmament. Considerable annual reductions in military spending might be possible. Based on calculations by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the potential peace dividend in the industrialized countries can be estimated at about \$100 billion a year, possibly rising to between \$200 and \$300 billion a year by the year 2000. Total potential savings would then be between \$1,500 and \$2,000 billion during the course of the 1990s.

Having said that, my delegation would like to emphasize that new resources resulting from disarmament should be invested in social and economic programmes. In an improved international atmosphere it is our view that it should be possible for high military expenditures to be reduced in favour of human development.

As a party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, my country underlines the objectives established in the Declaration on the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic. The basic obligations of the States parties to the Treaty of Tlatelolco are to use nuclear material and facilities exclusively for peaceful purposes, not to possess nuclear weapons, not to engage in or encourage any nuclear-weapon activities in the region and not to permit any presence of such weapons on their territories. My country remains committed to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to the strengthening of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Mr. SINHASANI (Thailand): At the outset, Sir, allow me, on behalf of the delegation of Thailand, to express our warmest congratulations to you upon your election as Chairman of the First Committee and through you to the other officers of the Committee. I am confident that under your able guidance the work of the Committee will be brought to a successful conclusion. You can be assured of my delegation's full support.

My delegation also wishes to pay a tribute to the distinguished Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and to the competent members of his staff.

The past year has seen momentous changes in the international scene: the end of the cold war; East-West relations moved from confrontation to cooperation. Positive developments have also taken place in the fields of arms control and disarmament, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons. Unilateral and bilateral reductions in nuclear weapons have either taken place or been agreed upon. The world appears to have taken steps back from the nuclear abyss, but regional conflicts and hot spots remain around the world, and they can escalate into wider conflict at any time. The Gulf War was a case in point. It also demonstrated clearly the danger and threat to international security posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction. Calls for a global effort to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons are being heard from every corner of the world.

On the question of nuclear disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, my delegation welcomes the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles - the INF Treaty - and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) between the United States and the Soviet Union. We also applaud the recent historic initiative of

(Mr. Sinhaseni, Thailand)

President Bush and the equally positive response by President Gorbachev, which will result in unilateral and complementary nuclear disarmament and reduction.

A related issue is the question of a nuclear-test ban. We welcome the fact that the Amendment Conference of the States parties to the partial test-ban Treaty held last December saw the participation of both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. While it was unfortunate that the Conference was unable to make progress towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty, Thailand fully supports the continued consultations being undertaken by the Chairman of the Conference, Mr. Ali Alatas of Indonesia. We also note that discussions on a nuclear-test ban continued during the Conference on Disarmament in the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, which was re-established this year. We hope that further progress in the verification system will finally clear the way for the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban Treaty.

My delegation shares the view that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) should remain the centre-piece in efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons. Thailand welcomes the recent accession of several States to the Treaty: South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. We welcome in particular the announcements of China and France - the two remaining nuclear-weapon States - of their intention to accede to the Treaty.

As a party to the NPT, we would like to urge all States that are not yet parties to accede to the Treaty as soon as possible. Universal participation and an agreement on the extension of the Treaty beyond 1995 are essential to ensure the continued viability of the regime.

Non-proliferation agreements must be complemented by appropriate and effective international controls. Events in the Gulf have clearly shown the need for strengthening the effectiveness of the safeguards system. In this

(Mr. Sinhaseni, Thailand)

regard, the International Atomic Energy Agency has a key role to play. We also wish to commend the Agency for the tremendous work it is currently undertaking in the Gulf.

The frightful possibility of chemical weapons being used during the Gulf War highlighted for all the need for the early conclusion of an effective chemical weapons convention. Thailand shares the concern of the international community over the development and stockpiling of such weapons. We note the momentum gathered on negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. We were heartened to hear from the President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Arteaga of Venezuela, that substantial progress had been achieved in 1991 and that the next report of the Conference on Disarmament would contain the complete text of the convention.

As a State that neither produces nor processes chemical weapons, and as a party to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for more than 60 years, Thailand fully supports such efforts. We will contribute in any way we can. We feel privileged to have been asked to send a chemical weapons expert to participate in the mission of the United Nations Special Committee investigating chemical warfare agents and facilities in Iraq.

My delegation is pleased to note that the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the biological weapons Convention, held in Geneva last month, reached important decisions on improving and supplementing existing confidence-building measures and on verification measures. It is our hope that States that are not yet parties to the Convention will be encouraged by the outcome of the Review Conference and accede to the Convention.

Success in disarmament will remain elusive if insufficient attention is paid to confidence-building measures. One successful case in implementing the

(Mr. Sinhaseni, Thailand)

measures is the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). We strongly believe that other regions can benefit from similar confidence-building measures. The regional meeting on confidence-building measures in the Asia-Pacific region, organized by the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific in Kathmandu, has provided an extremely valuable impetus. Thailand has fully supported both the concept and the convening of such a meeting by providing voluntary contributions.

The proposals for a United Nations arms register are receiving much attention. While my Government supports the call for greater transparency and is cognizant of the need to stem the development, accumulation and transfer of arms, it is our view that such a register must be universal and non-discriminatory, and that due respect must be given to a country's right to self-defence. As the Secretary-General so eloquently and succinctly stated:

"... we must seek to develop fair criteria for multilateral control of arms transfers while at the same time meeting the legitimate security needs of States". (A/46/1, p. 12)

May we add our view that, on this complex issue, genuine consensus is required and can be achieved only through consultations and dialogue.

In conclusion, my delegation is of the view that we are witnessing in this Committee and in the General Assembly as a whole a greater sense of cooperation and compromise. More resolutions are being adopted by consensus. Resolutions dealing with the same issues are being successfully merged. My delegation welcomes this positive trend and pledges its full support and cooperation towards effective arms limitation and disarmament. As the Secretary-General so rightly reminds us in his report on the work of the Organization:

(Mr. Sinhaseni, Thailand)

"The opportunities now presented to us are not likely to remain open indefinitely." (A/46/1, p. 11)

Mr. TUCKER (Bahamas): On behalf of the delegation of the Bahamas, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee at the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. My delegation is confident that, given your experience and diplomatic skills, much will be accomplished during this session. Our congratulations also go to the other officers of the Committee. Moreover, may I extend my delegation's gratitude to the former Chairman, Ambassador Rana of Nepal, who so ably steered the Committee's deliberations at its forty-fifth session.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

The Bahamas is a non-nuclear-weapon State which has no interest whatsoever in acquiring or producing these weapons of mass destruction. When viewed from this perspective, our concern for and commitment to the maintenance of peace, stability, and general and complete disarmament should be clearly understood.

Dramatic developments that have had an impact on these areas have captured both our interest and imagination. A major threat to international peace and security in the post-cold war era was averted when coalition forces accomplished the liberation of Kuwait. The role of the United Nations has thereafter been demonstratively enhanced. Relaxation of East-West tension continues, making the possibilities for the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements more realistic. The cooperation and political will of Member States has led to notable progress in the field of disarmament.

Recent events, particularly in Eastern Europe, are a clear indication that conflict and strife can erupt at any time and precipitate international crises. Further, although a Middle East peace conference is imminent, the region remains for the present a perpetual battleground. The transfer and sale of arms continues unabated. It is imperative that the international community consolidate gains and formulate strategies that will guarantee global peace and stability into the twenty-first century by re-evaluating and reformulating its thinking on the whole question of security and disarmament.

If current trends towards nuclear-arms reduction is to be accelerated, the prevention of nuclear war and the promotion of nuclear disarmament must remain at the top of the international agenda. We must encourage positive further efforts to prevent the proliferation not only of nuclear weapons, but of all weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons as well.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

It is from this perspective that we view recent initiatives in the international community and pronouncements by major actors aimed at curbing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The most significant development in this area, my delegation believes, was the signing, after 9 years of negotiation, of the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (START) between the Governments of the United States and the Soviet Union in July 1991. Under the terms of the Treaty, the number of long-range nuclear weapons in the arsenals of both countries will be reduced for the first time. This is essential to the step-by-step process of reducing nuclear weapons even for deterrence purposes. My delegation further welcomes the series of proposals announced by President Bush on 27 September and by President Gorbachev on 5 October 1991, that promise unilateral cuts in tactical nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles with multiple warheads. These proposals give hope to non-nuclear-weapon States that nuclear-weapon States are indeed committed to halting the arms race.

The decline in the number of nuclear-weapons tests and the positive developments in this area are salutary. They cannot, however, obscure the fact that thousands of nuclear weapons remain in the arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States. The 1990 comprehensive study on nuclear weapons confirms that the qualitative and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons remains a fact despite quantitative reductions. After four decades, the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control is still elusive.

A complete ban on nuclear tests is at the crux of preventing nuclear proliferation, as the testing of nuclear devices is a critical and indispensable element in the creation of weapons. Banning tests in all environments will curtail the creation of more advanced weapons and prevent

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

the build-up of significant nuclear arsenals. The Amendment Conference under Article II of the partial test-ban Treaty in January was essential to focusing on this most obvious fact. As one of the States calling for the convening of the Conference, the Bahamas regrets that it did not reach agreement on the text of a final declaration. It is nevertheless encouraged that some progress was made and hopes that the extensive exchange of views will eventually lead to constructive contributions towards the achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

The non-proliferation Treaty is an important instrument for preventing the further development of nuclear weapons. My delegation therefore joins others in welcoming the recent accession to the Treaty by the Governments of South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia. The important decision of the two remaining nuclear States, France and China, to accede to the Treaty is equally welcomed. These recent accessions should encourage other States that have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty in order to strengthen the regime and give it universality. We are aware that ratification of or accession to the non-proliferation Treaty do not in themselves guarantee that countries will not develop weapons. It is our best assurance, however, that States are willing to be bound by the standards of the international community.

In our Latin American and Caribbean region, my delegation views the nuclear cooperation agreement between Argentina and Brazil as an essential step towards nuclear non-proliferation. The Bahamas hopes that ongoing discussions of the safeguards agreement between these two countries and the International Atomic Energy Agency will soon be concluded, thereby permitting accession of the two countries to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (the Treaty of Tlatelolco). The Bahamas is a State Party to this Treaty, the first to establish a

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited area. My delegation will therefore again co-sponsor the resolution that will be submitted to this Committee under this item. We further urge those States of the region which have not yet done so to accede to the Treaty at the earliest opportunity, considering that the prohibition of nuclear weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean should constitute a priority for all.

Significant progress was made towards concluding a chemical weapons convention during the 1991 substantive session of the Conference on Disarmament. This progress is detailed in document A/26/27, which the Ambassador of Venezuela, in his capacity as Chairman of the Conference, introduced to this Committee on 15 October 1991. Concluding the elaboration of the draft convention as a matter of priority is, my delegation believes, a crucial task for the Conference. A chemical weapons convention would provide an impetus for reducing the threat or use of such weapons. It is hoped that the remaining key issues will be resolved so that the Conference can adopt the draft convention at its 1992 session and so that, with the requisite support it can come into force early, as envisioned. Our best assurance for success is that the convention be effective, non-discriminatory and verifiable. Similarly, my delegation welcomes the progress made at the third Review Conference of the biological weapons Convention recently concluded in Geneva towards the strengthening of that Convention.

The fact that the issue of the clandestine transfer and acquisition of arms has generated such widespread interest during this debate speaks to its critical importance. The Gulf crisis ably demonstrated that the clandestine transfer and acquisition of arms can have disastrous consequences. In this instance, the consequence was to jeopardize world peace and security.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

But the stability of States can also be threatened when weapons are acquired by groups whose intent is inimical to the national interest. All nation States are entitled under the Charter of the United Nations to meet their individual or collective security needs. This we see as different from unchecked clandestine arms transfers, against which the international community must remain vigilant and which demand sound management strategies. Openness and transparency in the areas of the transfer, production and stockpiling of weapons must become the norm. The conventional forces in Europe process concluded last November, which focuses on the reduction of arms in Europe, and the proposed establishment of a United Nations monitored register of arms, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report (A/46/301), point the way forward to addressing this issue.

In his statement to this Committee on 15 October 1991, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, stated that:

"The international community has to espouse a multidimensional approach to peace and security in which the military aspect will not dominate but will be considered in relation to other priorities such as development, welfare, environment and the protection of human rights." (A/C.1/46/PV.4)

General and complete disarmament, then, must continue to be viewed as offering practical prospects for generating resources to promote economic and social development in areas where underdevelopment, drug trafficking, debt and poverty constitute major problems. The much heralded peace dividend must be brought to fruition. It is only when effective strategies for this purpose are devised by the international community and Governments that the continuing gap in international economic relations between developed and developing nations can be closed, and peace and security can be maintained.

(Mr. Tucker, Bahamas)

A new spirit of pragmatism is evident in the First Committee, and the progress it has helped us to achieve is manifest in our deliberations. We are challenged to remain focused on our objectives in an era of significant change and transformation. My delegation is committed to working cooperatively with other Member States in the First Committee and with its Chairman and Bureau for further progress during this session.

Mr. YATIV (Israel): Mr. Chairman, let me on the occasion of my delegation's first substantive statement this session express our confidence that you and the other Committee officers will conduct the deliberations of the Committee in the same skilled and competent manner in which they have been conducted thus far.

The debate in this Committee offers a good opportunity to take stock of the progress made in the field of disarmament and arms control. Since this Committee met last year, events of historic magnitude have intervened on the international arena. I especially need to mention the significant progress made in the laborious negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union, which culminated in the signature of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). That Treaty and the decision of the United States and the Soviet Union sharply to reduce tactical short-range nuclear weapons seem to provide the world with a promise of a new period of peace and security. That and other examples are bound to be followed in other parts of the world. Indeed, long-standing disputes and situations of tension and conflict are showing positive signs of moving towards peaceful resolution.

But I shall focus on the Middle East, which once again provided the international community and its organs with both deep concerns and encouraging prospects of solving its conflicts peacefully.

It is with a great deal of satisfaction that I can say today that our region is on the threshold of an auspicious event. In two days' time a peace conference is due to open in Madrid, to discuss face to face outstanding problems between representatives of Israel and Arab representatives of our immediate neighbours including the Palestinian Arabs who reside in the territories administered by Israel. This is indeed a historic event, which we hope will lay the ground for lasting peace in the Middle East.

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

On the other hand, developments in our area during the course of the year firmly support Israel's concerns over its very survival. These developments include the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, followed by Operation Desert Storm; the naked aggression by Iraq against Israel; and, most recently, Iraq's intransigence and deceit vis-à-vis its capabilities for mass destruction. The Gulf war has borne out Israel's contention once again that it faces an existential problem. Iraqi threats to obliterate Israel, the firing of some forty missiles on Israel, and the international summons of half a million military to confront the Iraqi deployment are stark evidence of what Israel would have had to face from Iraq alone, had it not been for the invasion of Kuwait.

What are the main lessons to be learned from this aggression, concerning problems of disarmament? As members know, Israel has maintained throughout the years that Iraqi threats against it were backed up by a nuclear programme designed to give substance to those threats. It is now apparent that a mere signature on international agreements such as the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons cannot in itself guarantee compliance. On the contrary, Iraq, which remains a signatory of the Treaty, exploited that status to benefit from technical assistance to enhance its nuclear programme, details of which are now coming to light. Moreover, Israel has maintained time and again that the non-proliferation Treaty has not prevented a single local war in the world. And it is local wars which have been the bane of the Middle East.

On the other hand, ever since 1980 Israel has proposed, and joined others in proposing, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Consequently,

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

Israel has been supporting the consensus reached by the General Assembly relating to this issue. Israel wishes to renew its call to implement this proposal, and to base it upon the following principles: that the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone should emanate from the States in the region; that there should be free and direct negotiations among the States concerned; that mutual arrangements promoting trust among the States concerned should be introduced; and that the proposed convention should eventually be signed and ratified by all the States in the region.

Israel is prepared to enter into negotiations with each and every Arab State in order to elaborate the ways and means required to implement every aspect of regional arms control. Israel wishes to reaffirm, just as it has been doing since the 1960s, that it would not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons into the Middle East.

As early as 1988, in his address to the fifteenth special session of the General Assembly, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir voiced a call to establish the Middle East as a region free from chemical weapons. This was reiterated by the then Foreign Minister, Mr. Moshe Arens, at the Paris Conference in January 1989. A similar call was voiced once again last year by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. David Levy, in his address to the General Assembly.

Israel is a signatory of the 1925 Geneva Convention and supports the goals of the proposed convention being drafted now in Geneva. On this issue, Israel's Foreign Minister, Mr. David Levy, on 2 October in his address to the General Assembly, stated Israel's position as follows:

"Our region has also known the use of chemical weapons, which Saddam Hussein used against his own people as well as against his Iranian enemy. The elimination of chemical weapons everywhere, and especially in

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

the Middle East, is of supreme importance. This is why Israel has expressed its agreement to become a party to the convention to eliminate chemical weapons, while maintaining the principle of universality. For the convention to be effective all States in the region must become party to it". (A/46/PV.18, p. 37)

As regards biological weapons, Israel this year joined the Third Review Conference, held last month in Geneva, as an observer in order to indicate its intention to follow closely the international deliberations on this issue also.

In the course of this year, a number of initiatives and plans on disarmament and arms control in the Middle East and globally have been made public. Israel supports all efforts aimed at restraining the arms race in every corner of the world. But in considering any specific blueprint designed for the Middle East, we have to take into consideration the constraints and conditions prevailing in our region.

One thing is very clear: the issue of weapons of mass destruction, both conventional and non-conventional, must be addressed with all urgency. Weapons of mass destruction are, in our view, all those weapons which can kill civilians indiscriminately. The destruction of Kuwait was not carried out by non-conventional weapons. The dozens of Scud missiles which hit Israel during the Gulf war fortunately did not bear any non-conventional warheads. None the less, the destruction was massive. It is eminently clear that conventional weapons can cause mass destruction no less than their non-conventional counterparts. Hence, any genuine attempt to reduce the potential of destruction must address as a first priority the reduction of the arsenals of conventional weapons in the Middle East. For the multitudes who may be killed by such weapons, their so-called conventionality is of no comfort.

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

The Gulf War and its aftermath should be a watershed not only in regard to arms control and disarmament, but also in regard to the overall atmosphere in the region. If before the Gulf war the direction in the region was clearly towards war, we now have a chance to promote peace. Israel's consolidated formula to promote the peace process includes the following principles: the danger of military confrontation, and especially the use of weapons likely, by reason of their quality and quantity, to cause massive destruction must be addressed, reduced and, hopefully, removed; and direct negotiations without preconditions must be held between Israel and its neighbours, in order to sign peace agreements between Israel and each of the Arab States.

Despite the obstacles which still lie ahead, much can be done, including work in the field of arms control. However, all efforts or initiatives of any kind must avoid formulas or resolutions which are meant to impose externally conceived conduct.

There are regional circumstances, especially in matters of security, which can be settled only among the States in the region. Those circumstances pertain to one's immediate neighbours, and they cannot be settled by bland international dispositions. In this regard, the Secretary-General's report on the nuclear-weapon-free zone submitted to the General Assembly in September 1990 states categorically that confidence has to be built among all parties to the conflict. It states that military solutions to political problems are excluded. Most important of all, there must be progress in solving the fundamental conflicts in the region. Without such progress, technical measures will hardly be given serious thought, much less be developed to provide a meaningful barrier to tension.

(Mr. Yativ, Israel)

No political process meant to solve the problems of the Middle East can be lasting and meaningful if it is not accompanied and reinforced by a genuine and regionally conceived process of disarmament and arms control. In this respect, it is Israel's hope that the atmosphere of accommodation and understanding which seems to be gaining ground in other parts of the world will indeed put down roots also in the Middle East.

Mr. TUN (Myanmar): The delegation of Myanmar, which I have the privilege to represent here today, is pleased to extend to you, Sir, its warmest felicitations on your election to chair the First Committee, an important forum in our Organization's search for peace and stability. The able manner in which you and the other officers of the Committee have been guiding its work since we commenced our deliberations assures us of a fruitful session.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express my delegation's deep appreciation to your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Jai Pratap Rana of Nepal, for the exemplary manner in which he guided the work of the Committee at our last session.

As we enter the 1990s there can be little doubt that we are standing on the threshold of a new era which holds the promise of a better world. Nations of the world, freed at last from the rigid structures of the cold-war years, when every issue of international peace and security was viewed through the prism of East-West relations, now have an opportunity to fashion a new international order based on justice and cooperation.

If our hopes for such a world order are to be realized they must be firmly anchored in the principles of the Charter. While doctrines of

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

deterrence and balance of power that dominated military thought and planning in the decades of the cold war are outmoded and are to be discarded, the principles of the Charter remain valid and must be held inviolate. Pillars of the Charter such as the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other States must be upheld and not allowed to be eroded. No State or group of States should be permitted to arrogate to themselves the right to mould the new order in the image of their choice to serve their own particular goals and interests. Here, the statement of Myanmar's Minister for Foreign Affairs in the General Assembly on 4 October 1991 bears repeating. He said:

"Nothing that has happened since the watershed year of 1985, when events that will surely go down in history as marking the beginning of the end of the cold war first manifested themselves, requires a modification of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter. Indeed, if anything has become plain from the rapid evolution of international affairs it is that the paramount law of the Charter must be upheld as inviolate and must be scrupulously respected in every sphere of intercourse between nations if today's promise is not to become tomorrow's bad dream." (A/46/PV.22, p. 26)

The momentous changes that have taken place in the international political environment in the past few years have provided a much needed impetus to bilateral disarmament negotiations. Meaningful disarmament measures, which for so long have eluded the world, are now becoming attainable and can no longer be considered Utopian. The package of unprecedented disarmament measures announced by the United States President on 27 September 1991 and the equally bold and positive response of the Soviet

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

President on 5 October have given a further boost to the momentum generated by the 1987 Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles and the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. My delegation is pleased that the latest nuclear-arms initiatives of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics have been followed up by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which on 17 October 1991 decided to cut its nuclear arsenal by a further 700 warheads from a total of 3,600. These developments mark a turning-point in the struggle for human survival.

The elimination of all tactical nuclear weapons on land and on ships, submarines and naval aircraft is an important step. Perhaps more significant than the numbers and types of weapons involved is the confirmation of our belief that we can halt and reverse the unbridled nuclear-arms race. It also validates the principle of seeking undiminished security at progressively lower levels of armaments.

While the primary responsibility for removing the threat of a nuclear holocaust rests with the nuclear-weapon States, it cannot be over-emphasized that all States, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear, have a vital interest in the negotiations on nuclear disarmament; while progress in the United States-Soviet Union bilateral negotiations is crucial, these negotiations cannot replace the efforts being carried out in the multilateral forum. Bilateral efforts must be accompanied by multilateral negotiations. We are therefore disappointed that the positive trends in the bilateral sphere have not been matched in the single multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament. No movement has been registered on seven out of the eight priority items on its agenda.

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

My delegation shares the frustration and disappointment expressed by many over the lack of progress towards an agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. As is well known, preambles to both the partial test-ban Treaty and the Non-Proliferation Treaty expressly underline that the discontinuance of all test explosions of nuclear weapons for all time is a fundamental objective. Having consistently opposed nuclear testing in all environments, Myanmar became a party to the 1963 Moscow Treaty in the belief that it represents an important first step for the realization of a comprehensive nuclear-test ban and the eventual elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. The absence of a comprehensive test-ban treaty nearly three decades after the treaty was signed tends to raise doubts as to the commitment of the Depositary States of the partial test-ban Treaty.

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

Myanmar continues to regard a comprehensive nuclear-test ban as an essential step towards nuclear disarmament. It would be unrealistic to expect meaningful disarmament accords in the future if the qualitative improvement of nuclear arms continues unabated. On the other hand, an agreement to cease all tests would put fresh heart into the entire disarmament process. Indeed, for Myanmar, as well as for the overwhelming majority of States, agreement on a comprehensive nuclear-test ban would symbolize the renewed commitment of nuclear-weapon States to seek nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, the one-year moratorium announced recently by the Soviet Union is a welcome step and we hope that it is a significant lead towards a comprehensive nuclear-test ban. We urge other nuclear-weapon States to follow this lead by suspending all tests through unilateral or agreed moratoriums. It is our hope that all nuclear-weapon States will now agree to commence negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

The General Assembly has on several occasions called for universal adherence to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a means of strengthening the non-proliferation regime. The announced intention of China and France to accede to the Treaty will no doubt enhance the prospects of universality. The remaining States, we feel, will be encouraged to join when nuclear-weapon States demonstrate their unequivocal commitment to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament, as stipulated in article VI of the Treaty.

Another issue that needs to be addressed expeditiously is that of chemical weapons. The utmost urgency of completing the negotiations on a

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

convention on the complete and effective prohibition of the development, production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and on their destruction has been underlined by events in the Gulf region, where the threat of the use of such weapons of mass destruction was ever-present. The Conference on Disarmament has already made significant headway on the text of the convention and we feel that efforts should be redoubled to conclude the negotiations.

One fundamental point that my delegation wishes to stress is that the verification regime for the future chemical-weapons convention should be one that is universally acceptable, fair and non-discriminatory so as to ensure its success. Most important, any exceptional verification measure to be adopted and any assessment to be made should be done in a multilateral framework in accordance with agreed principles.

My delegation is pleased to note that in presenting the report of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Horacio Arteaga of Venezuela, in his capacity as President of the Conference, expressed confidence that the goal of reaching definitive agreement in 1992 can be met without serious difficulty.

Myanmar remains steadfastly committed to the achievement of a total ban on chemical weapons and my delegation would like to avail itself of this opportunity to declare yet again that Myanmar neither possesses chemical weapons nor has the intention of acquiring them.

We are witnessing today important disarmament initiatives that promise to be the beginning of the end of the nuclear-arms race. But weapons of mass destruction are not limited to nuclear arms alone; chemical, biological and conventional weapons are no less important. Since the Second World War almost all armed conflicts have been fought with conventional weapons and in the last two decades, with advances in science and technology, there has been a

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

phenomenal increase in the destructive potential of these weapons. That conventional weapons can be employed with deadly accuracy and devastating results was amply demonstrated in the Gulf War.

Whilst there is growing recognition of the need to curb the conventional arms race, little has been done to place necessary restraints on the production, stockpiling and transfer of conventional arms. Weapons sales are booming, notwithstanding the fact that in recent months there have been agreements among the major Powers on rules of restraint governing arms transfers.

It is against this background that we have studied the report of the Secretary-General (A/46/301), "Study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms". While the merit of the proposal for the creation of a universal and non-discriminatory register of arms transfers under the auspices of the United Nations is unquestionable, it should be implemented, in view of the breadth and sensitivity of the issue, only after thorough assessment.

As pointed out in the study, politico-military conditions vary from region to region, and measures to promote transparency in arms transfers may not be adopted immediately by all States. Moreover, the proposed register fails to include the production and stockpiling of arms. My delegation accordingly feels that every State should have time to study document A/46/301 carefully and be permitted to make its observations before any action is taken.

(Mr. Tun, Myanmar)

The dawn of a new era of understanding and cooperation gives us hope that it will result in meaningful agreements on disarmament. We now have an opportunity to choose between a continuing arms race and a more stable and just world. Let us work to consolidate and extend the positive trends that we are witnessing today.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

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46/PV.
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General Assembly
FORTY-SIXTH SESSION
Official Records

FIRST COMMITTEE
20th meeting
held on
Monday, 28 October 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 20th MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. MROZIEWICZ

(Poland)

CONTENTS

- General debate on all disarmament items (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS 47 TO 65 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL DISARMAMENT ITEMS

The CHAIRMAN: I call on the representative of the United Kingdom, who, in his capacity as Chairman of the Group of Experts on the Study on Ways and Means of Promoting Transparency in International Transfers of Conventional Arms, will introduce the study.

Mr. McDONALD (United Kingdom): I feel very privileged to be here today to present to the First Committee the report of the Secretary-General on ways and means of improving transparency in arms transfers (A/46/301). Before I do so, however, I hope I will be allowed to make two tributes.

First, I must draw attention to the fact that the first two meetings of the Group of Experts were chaired by Ambassador Plaja from Italy. He is, sadly, no longer with us, but it was he who laid the foundations for this report. Without his wise, patient and courteous guidance, we would, I am sure, not have been able to arrive at this agreed report.

The second tribute I must make, with your indulgence, Sir, is to the members of the Study Group themselves. They came from many countries with many different backgrounds and skills. They had two things in common. The first was an overpowering belief that the subject of arms transfers was one of vital importance and one which the world community should now seize the opportunity to tackle. The other feature which we all shared in the Group - and one which I know it shares with the First Committee - was an ability to get along together, to work together, to understand each other's viewpoint, to find compromises and finally - not always easily but finally - to arrive at a unanimously agreed report with agreed recommendations.

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

In preparing the report, and particularly at its last session earlier this year, the group of experts was very aware that the outbreak of war in the Gulf not only had demonstrated the tragic consequences which can flow from irresponsible arms build-ups but had also sensitized the world to the issue. We believed - we still believe - that if ever there was a time for action in this field, that time is now. Our report therefore was written to be a positive document calling for urgent action.

As the report makes clear, we did not see transparency in arms transfers as a complete panacea. Nor we did see it in one form only. Transparency and openness in arms transfers was, we believed, an initial and important step towards building confidence between nations and lowering suspicion and tension. There is an important place for openness in this field within countries. And the report exhorts countries to practice, if I may borrow a phrase, glasnost in this area. There are also important initiatives to be taken regionally.

We were very aware of and of course welcomed the very important agreements in arms control which have recently been achieved. The group of experts saw these as pointing the way to other regional agreements covering transparency or control in arms matters. In saying this, however, the group was not suggesting one common formula or recipe. Every region, every time will have its own mix, its own formula, its own circumstances.

Finally, the group of experts believed that the time had come for some action to be taken globally to promote transparency in arms transfers. The report therefore recommends the introduction of a United Nations arms-transfer register without delay, covering both supplier and recipient: a universal and non-discriminatory register which would promote confidence among all the

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

countries of the world and which would indicate authoritatively any sign of an unwarranted or irresponsible arms build-up. The report does not spell out exactly how this register should be constructed. It does, however, strongly recommend that it should be set up in a form which would allow its early implementation with the widest possible participation.

The report is explicit in its belief that some will find that the register as proposed does not go far enough. We understood and appreciated that viewpoint. It was our belief, however, that we had to start somewhere and that the time was propitious to start now. Even the longest journey must start with one short step. We wrote and agreed on our report in the hope that it might indeed be just such a step, and in the right direction.

Finally, our report deals with the subject of the illicit arms trade. This subject is different in kind from the rest of our remit. The illicit arms trade is by its nature covert and not susceptible, therefore, to transparency. In its effect on human beings, however, and on society it is no less important than the more normal arms trade. The group of experts was only too aware of the devastation and human misery, the exploitation and the corrupt manipulation of power which are often the results of the illicit arms trade. In our report we have therefore in the strongest language drawn attention to these dangers. There are welcome signs that internationally there is a growing cooperation of effort to cut back this cancer. We noted the increasing cooperation between customs and enforcement authorities of many nations. This is surely the right way to go. Our report recommends strong national procedures to outlaw this illicit trade. We have also highlighted the need to promote the training and retraining of customs officers. There is much to be done. As our report indicates, we hope that the United Nations

(Mr. McDonald, United Kingdom)

itself may find ways of assisting this ongoing improvement in the effectiveness of controls so that the evil of the arms trade can be squeezed out of existence.

Mr. BATIOUK (Ukraine) (interpretation from Russian): The position of Ukraine on the main problems of disarmament was explained in the statement of Leonid Kravchuk, President of the Parliament of Ukraine, at the 14th plenary meeting, held on 30 September 1991, and further detailed on 14 October in the statement made in this Committee by Anatoly Zlenko, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

However, in the light of recent events in Ukraine - which have been the topic of some sensationalist comment in the media and of hasty remarks by certain foreign officials - and in the light of additional questions raised by delegations, we need to provide fuller information about the position of Ukraine on conventional-arms reductions and nuclear disarmament in its territory.

Immediately following the August coup in the USSR, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted a decree on military units in Ukraine. Under that decree, all armed-forces units stationed in Ukraine will be subject to the authority of the Ukrainian Parliament. The main purpose of the decree was to prevent the use of the armed forces against the people and the State sovereignty of Ukraine. During the coup, such attempts were indeed made.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

The next step to ensure sovereignty and independence was the decision of Parliament to create Ukraine's own armed forces. Draft laws on matters relating to defence arrangements were considered last week. Parliament decided that the Ukrainian armed forces to be created were designed to protect its independence and territorial integrity and that Ukraine's defensive capability would be maintained at the level of sufficiency for protection against aggression.

The law concerning defence establishes that Ukraine does not recognize war as a means of settling international problems; that it does not possess weapons of mass destruction; that it has no territorial claims against any other State and does not view any people as an enemy; that it will never be the first to start military operations against any country if it does not itself become the victim of aggression and that its armed forces will not be used to settle the internal affairs of other States.

With regard to the creation of the armed forces of Ukraine, it should be borne in mind that what is involved is not the creation of additional units but, on the contrary, the gradual reduction of the former Soviet Union's forces stationed in Ukraine's territory to a fraction of their number and their replacement with smaller national armed forces, totalling about 400,000 in all branches. As Ukraine's Defence Minister Morozov observed in this connection, the way to give Ukraine, a nation of 52 million, its own armed forces is to make a substantial reduction in the organs of military administration and in troop strength. That reduction, amounting to hundreds of thousands of persons, is linked to the solution of complex social, political and economic problems. For that reason, the whole intensive process of reduction to 400,000 will take several years, lasting until 1994-1995.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

The fact that the decisions adopted by Ukraine specifically involve demilitarization and disarmament is eloquently demonstrated by the fact that whereas previously at least 15 per cent of the gross national product was devoted to military needs, Parliament has decided from now on to devote less than 3 per cent of the national budget to the armed forces of Ukraine.

Another aspect of the problem concerns nuclear forces. The ways to settle the matter of the nuclear forces situated in the territory of Ukraine were determined in Parliament's statement on the denuclearized status of Ukraine, adopted on 24 October of this year. Confirming Ukraine's intention to adhere to non-nuclear principles and its desire to help strengthen the international non-proliferation regime, Parliament declared the following:

"First, the presence of the nuclear weapons of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in the territory of Ukraine is temporary.

"Secondly, those weapons are now under the control of the appropriate structures of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Ukraine insists on its right to monitor the non-use of the nuclear weapons deployed in its territory.

"Thirdly, Ukraine will pursue a policy aimed at the total elimination of nuclear weapons and components of their deployment situated in the territory of the Ukrainian State. It intends to do this in the shortest time possible, taking account of legal, technical, financial, organizational and other possibilities and the proper maintenance of ecological safety. A wide programme for the conversion of the defence industry, reorienting part of the military-industrial capability towards meeting the needs of economic and social development, will be launched in Ukraine.

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

"Fourthly, Ukraine, as one of the successors of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, will abide by the provisions of the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States in so far as the nuclear weapons situated in its territory are concerned. Ukraine is ready to start negotiations with the Republic of Belarus, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, with the participation of the appropriate structures of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, on the elimination of strategic nuclear weapons covered by that Treaty.

"Fifthly, Ukraine will take steps aimed at the elimination of all other nuclear weapons situated in its territory, and to that end it is ready, if need be, to participate in negotiations with all interested parties, using inter alia existing multilateral mechanisms in the field of disarmament.

"Sixthly, Ukraine will take appropriate steps to ensure the physical safety of all nuclear weapons situated in its territory until the complete elimination of those weapons is achieved.

"Seventhly, Ukraine intends to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State and to conclude with the International Atomic Energy Agency an appropriate agreement on guarantees."

That statement by Parliament was made after a comprehensive study of the question, and it has won understanding and support. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski, a prominent United States public figure, speaking of nuclear-weapon problems during his recent press conference at the Foreign Ministry of Ukraine, said that the kind of approach which underlies the

(Mr. Batiouk, Ukraine)

statement of the Parliament of Ukraine concerning the non-nuclear status of Ukraine can satisfy the international community.

In conclusion, I should like to stress again on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine that the maintenance of Ukraine's military potential at a level of defensive sufficiency, the reduction and the subsequent total elimination of nuclear weapons and Ukraine's entry into the international process of the treaty-based reduction and limitation of armaments in the region of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, as a full-fledged participant and partner, have been and continue to be priority goals of the Parliament and Government of Ukraine, with a view to guaranteeing national security.

Mr. KIM Chang Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): First of all, Sir, I should like to express, on behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, our warm congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am sure that with your rich experience and outstanding ability the First Committee will conclude its work successfully. I should also like to congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their elections.

Today, as all delegations have mentioned, the world is undergoing radical changes and entering upon a new phase of its development. At this remarkable time the urgent issue involved in the establishment of a new international order and the achievement of stable peace and security in conformity with the demands and aspirations of the peoples of the world is that of realizing disarmament.

We think that disarmament should be realized on a general and complete basis and at the earliest possible date.

The priority issue in the field of disarmament is nuclear disarmament. Nuclear weapons are the most abhorrent threat to world peace and to the peace of every country and nation. Since the appearance of nuclear weapons on our globe the world has not known peace for a single day. It is outrageous that on the eve of the twenty-first century the world should still be hostage to nuclear weapons.

The United States and the Soviet Union must take the lead in nuclear disarmament. In this regard we welcome the announcement by President Bush on 27 September that tactical nuclear weapons will be removed from Asia and Europe. The Soviet Union has also put forward positive proposals in response to the United States initiative. These steps represent a big step forward in achieving nuclear disarmament and a positive start in building a peaceful, new

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

world. However, this is just a first and partial step when viewed in the context of the goal of general and complete disarmament.

At present, a complete nuclear-test ban is one of the urgent items on the nuclear-disarmament agenda. Raising our voices against nuclear armament and nuclear proliferation here while nuclear testing continues is anachronistic and contradictory. The continuation of nuclear testing cannot be construed otherwise than as opposition to nuclear disarmament, intended as it is to replace old nuclear weapons with qualitatively improved ones to achieve domination over other countries by means of a nuclear monopoly.

The continued pursuit of nuclear testing will create nothing but confusion and mistrust in the nuclear disarmament arena. The United Nations has been discussing this issue for over 30 years and has adopted some 70 resolutions on the cessation of nuclear-test explosions, but those resolutions are still far from implementation. In the context of the new international order, nuclear weapons can no longer be accepted. We welcome the unilateral Soviet moratorium on nuclear testing. We urge the conclusion of a complete and comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

Another important requirement for world nuclear disarmament is the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world and their continuous expansion. The international community should support and encourage proposals to create nuclear-weapon-free zones on the national, subregional and regional levels. In particular, nuclear-weapon States should guarantee such zones through legally binding commitments.

The completion and conclusion of the draft convention on the prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons will represent an important step towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The Democratic People's Republic of

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

Korea, which once suffered from the use of chemical and bacteriological weapons, welcomes the progress made in negotiating the provisions of the draft convention and hopes that it will be completed and concluded at the earliest possible date.

The United Nations has long been discussing the question of arms transfer, and many delegations have expressed their views on an arms-transfer registry. We consider the arms-transfer registry to be a praiseworthy proposal in the context of disarmament and security. At the same time, however, there are doubts as to whether it would contribute substantially to disarmament and security. Who will determine the defence requirements of each nation - a question that lies entirely within the individual nation's sovereignty - and how can the level of defence capability and requirements be compared between or among States? Will such a registry not rather give rise to mistrust and explicit arms competition among States? Will it not be advantageous only to developed, arms-supplying countries and disastrous for the developing recipient countries? Arms transfer and the arms trade have so far been used in international relations as a means to derive economic benefits for the seller countries and, more important, as a way to impose political bargains and exert political pressure on other nations. Will the registry therefore mean an end to such political bargainings and pressure? We are of the opinion that an arms register must include the development and production of new weapons and the locations, types and quantity of nuclear weapons deployed in other countries. We believe that when those questions are addressed fairly the proposed registry system will contribute to general disarmament and security and to the establishment of a new international order.

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

The aftermath of the cold war has been keenly felt on the Korean peninsula. Although the international situation has experienced a trend towards détente and regional disputes are moving towards solution, the confrontation between the north and the south of Korea and the unstable environment of a cease-fire continue unabated. Armed forces a million strong stand opposed to each other along the Military Demarcation Line.

If we are to guarantee a durable peace and security in Asia and the rest of the world in keeping with the trend in the present international situation, it is imperative to remove the tension and confrontation on the Korean peninsula and establish peace there.

Only when disarmament has been achieved on the Korean peninsula will it be possible to create the conditions for peaceful reunification.

We believe that the adoption of a non-aggression declaration between the north and the south will serve as a starting-point for disarmament in Korea. A non-aggression declaration will initiate a decisive phase in replacing the unstable cease-fire system with a system of durable peace and contribute to easing confrontation. It will also be a starting-point for building confidence between the north and the south.

We propose that the north and the south should suspend all joint military exercises with foreign forces and other large-scale military exercises, turn the Demilitarized Zone along the Military Demarcation Line into a zone of peace to be used for peaceful purposes and take security measures to prevent any accidental conflict that could lead to escalation. We are demanding that the north and the south should phase down their armed forces to less than

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

100,000 each within a period of three or four years and that the foreign troops stationed in south Korea should complete their withdrawal when the armed forces of the north and the south are reduced to less than 100,000 each.

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

We are also proposing that the North and the South should dissolve all civilian military organizations and civilian forces, stop the introduction of new military technology and equipment and the development of armaments, and carry on the verification of arms reduction through on-site inspection. However, these proposals of ours remain unilateral efforts and have not yet received a positive response.

We hope that the North and the South will make and implement a joint commitment soon with regard to disarmament. It is also a matter of consideration that, since the north and the south gained membership of the United Nations, the United Nations Command in South Korea should be dissolved, United Nations forces withdrawn, and the Armistice Agreement replaced by a peace agreement that will, in our view, be a significant contribution to peace and disarmament in Korea.

The most important and urgent move towards achieving peace in Korea is to turn it into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In the southern part of the peninsula, there are 1,000 nuclear weapons deployed, and "Team Spirit" - a United States-South Korea joint military exercise simulating nuclear war - is conducted every year. Since the Korean nation is constantly exposed to a nuclear threat, we have strongly demanded that nuclear weapons in South Korea be removed and that the Korean peninsula be converted into a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Our Government long ago put forward proposals for turning the peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone of peace, and as recently as July this year made a new proposal that the North and the South agree and jointly declare the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean peninsula. The United States, the Soviet Union and China, the nuclear-weapon States

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

neighbouring on the Korean peninsula, should legally guarantee the nuclear-weapon-free status of the peninsula if the peninsula is declared such. The non-nuclear-weapon States in Asia should support the conversion of the Korean peninsula into a nuclear-weapon-free zone and respect its nuclear-weapon-free status. We believe that this proposal will help remove the nuclear threat on the peninsuls and strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation system.

The purpose of our accession to the non-proliferation Treaty was to remove nuclear weapons from South Korea and to totally eliminate the nuclear threat on the peninsula. This purpose and demand of ours have become clearer now that it has been confirmed that there are nuclear weapons in South Korea.

We do not oppose nuclear inspection. However, since the nuclear issue in Korea is directly related to the fate and sovereignty of the Korean nation, we cannot accept unilateral inspection. Even if we should allow unilateral inspection in the northern part of the peninsula, it would not help in any way the removal of nuclear weapons from the South or the denuclearization of the whole peninsula. That is why we are requesting simultaneous inspections, if any, in both the North and the South.

We have neither the capability to engage in a nuclear arms race with other countries, nor any intention of developing nuclear weapons to destroy our own nation. Today, the policy of holding nuclear weapons is totally anachronistic. The United States expressed its willingness to withdraw its nuclear weapons from South Korea. If all nuclear weapons are pulled out, the safeguards agreement problem will be solved smoothly and a decisive phase opened for the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

(Mr. Kim, Democratic People's
Republic of Korea)

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea is a peace-loving State and the Korean people greatly treasure peace. Because our nation lives divided; because its two sides continue to confront each other; and because the unstable cease-fire environment persists in our land, the thirst of our people for peace is greater than that of any other people. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea and its people will spare no effort to achieve a lasting peace in Korea and to contribute to safeguarding world peace, a common goal of mankind. I hope that all States Members of the United Nations will make a positive contribution to the attainment of peace on the Korean peninsula.

Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh): At the outset, please allow me to convey our warm felicitations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Through you I also express our congratulations to the members of the Bureau on their election. I am confident that with your rich experience, wide knowledge and diplomatic skills, you will guide the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion. I assure you of the full cooperation of my delegation.

I would like to pay our sincere tribute to late Ambassador and Nobel Laureate Alfonso Garcia Robles, who passed away recently. His outstanding contribution to disarmament and to the work of the First Committee will be remembered by all of us.

We meet here against the backdrop of a dramatic change in the international scenario. The era of the cold war has receded into the past. The rapprochement of the super-Powers has given rise to cooperation instead of confrontation. Mutual understanding has propelled them into active interaction. A start has been made towards real disarmament, and a joint endeavour to find solutions to global problems.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

The encouraging developments of détente and cooperation among the major Powers of the world, coinciding with positive breakthroughs in many of the regional conflicts and the ushering in of democracy in many parts of the world, are demonstrations of the emergence of a new era of collective action and cooperation. Despite an increased momentum of understanding, conflict, tension and instability in many regions continue to pose a threat to world peace and security.

Eastern Europe has further undergone radical changes during the last year. The reunification of Germany and the recent events in the Soviet Union will have far-reaching political and economic consequences for the world. The end of the cold war has signalled the collapse in international relations of two competing power blocs.

New centres of economic and political power with new variables and alignments can emerge with yet uncertain consequences. The evolving scenario is not unmixed with danger for third world countries. A major anxiety is that it should not compromise the political and economic security interests of the developing countries either through regional hegemony or marginalization. We face a situation of both promise and peril.

The super-Power détente has led to a significant reduction of nuclear and conventional arsenals alike. We welcome this progress in arms control and disarmament. The signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by the United States and the Soviet Union last July marks a significant step by the two nations to reduce considerably their strategic nuclear arsenals. The signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is yet another step towards ensuring peace and security in Europe. The Amendment Conference on the partial test-ban Treaty held in New York last January was important

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

because it was the first multilateral negotiating forum on a nuclear arms treaty where all countries participated to attain the objective of complete cessation of nuclear testing. In this regard, we support the initiative of the President of the Conference to reconvene it.

Bangladesh welcomes the recent historic initiative by President George Bush to undertake unilateral measures to eliminate tactical nuclear weapons as well as the reciprocal offer by President Gorbachev to seek an even deeper reduction of nuclear forces. They both deserve our sincere gratitude. These proposals, in our view, constitute a major breakthrough towards a nuclear-free and safer world for all of us.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

Let me recall the statement of the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, who said,

"... the Soviet and United States initiatives are providing a unique opportunity to modify the actual pattern of the arms race in fundamental ways - indeed, to turn it into its own opposite: a disarmament race."

(A/C.1/46/PV.12, p. 21)

Despite reductions under the Treaty, the super-Powers will continue to retain vast numbers of nuclear arsenals far in excess of any conceivable national-security requirements. The arms race continues with its terrifying statistics of wasteful costs. Over a trillion dollars are spent annually on the means of destruction. What could be achieved from reduced military expenditure can be illustrated by an example. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that to make significant progress in preventing child mortality and malnourishment for 50 million children only \$2.5 billion would be needed. Similarly, with the peace-making process under way, expenditures on peace-keeping operations amount to almost nothing compared to expenditures on armaments.

The stupendous expenditure on armaments is unjustified and unethical. Mere weapons cannot ensure security. Peace and security will continue to be threatened as long as poverty, hunger, squalour and despair continue to bedevil the lives of billions. In this regard, the statement of Mr. Yasushi Akashi, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, is very pertinent. He said,

"The international community has to espouse a multidimensional approach to peace and security in which the military aspect will not

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

dominate but will be considered in relation to other priorities such as development, welfare, environment and the protection of human rights."

(A/C.1/46/PV.4, p. 4)

Peace and security will not be achieved unless international cooperation is extended to deal with the threats that derive from failure in development, environmental degradation and a lack of meaningful progress in social and humanitarian issues. The wider concept of security must be realized by us all. The Secretary-General, in his report on the work of the Organization has therefore rightly said:

"No system of collective security will remain viable unless workable solutions are sought to the problem of poverty and destitution, afflicting the greater part of the world." (A/46/L, p. 12)

Though the risk of nuclear war has receded over the past four decades, vast arsenals of nuclear weapons and stockpiles of fissile material by their very existence imperil the world. We therefore urge the nuclear-weapon States to take initiatives expeditiously towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, and we pray that they will do so. Bangladesh believes that there is a need to agree on a universal and non-discriminatory convention on the prohibition of the production, development and stockpiling of nuclear weapons and fissionable materials.

We believe that a comprehensive test-ban treaty would be a crucial step towards preventing the emergence of a new generation of nuclear weapons. It is our considered view that cessation of all nuclear-weapons testing will lead to the achievement of our ultimate goal of the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. We therefore attach the highest priority to the early conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In that regard, we welcome the

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

announcement by President Gorbachev of a unilateral one-year moratorium on nuclear testing by the Soviet Union and we urge other nuclear-weapon States to follow suit with a view to achieving the complete cessation of nuclear testing at an early date.

Our constitutional commitment weds us to the concept of general and complete disarmament. For that reason, Bangladesh has rejected the nuclear alternative for itself. We have therefore acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We support all measures seeking to promote disarmament and to end the arms race, and the call for nuclear-free zones.

Universal adherence to the Treaty would consolidate the NPT régime. In that regard Bangladesh welcomes particularly the decision in principle by France and China to adhere to the non-proliferation Treaty. Thus, all five nuclear-weapon States will soon be parties to the Treaty. We have always stressed the need for the NPT to be strengthened through commitments to positive and negative security assurances, standardized and tighter nuclear export regulations and more effective safeguards under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Durable peace can be established only through the elimination and destruction of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In that regard, we welcome the progress in negotiations towards a chemical-weapons convention, which appear to have entered a crucial final phase. We hope agreement on the convention will be reached by next year. Bangladesh will certainly make every effort to contribute to its early conclusion.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

While we believe there should be adequate concentration on nuclear disarmament, which should have foremost priority, attention should also be focused on measures for the limitation and reduction of conventional arms. This must be pursued within the framework of progress towards general and complete disarmament. Today, conventional weapons are acquiring increasing sophistication through technological advances. As a result, they have attained devastating destructive power. We therefore feel and believe that maintenance of conventional capabilities in excess of the legitimate security needs of States can have destabilizing ramifications for regions and the world. There should be arms reductions in a balanced and equitable manner without affecting genuine security requirements. Thus, stability would be enhanced at lower military levels. Any acquisition of arms beyond perceived needs would heighten suspicion and encourage the arms race.

Bangladesh is deeply committed to the peaceful uses of the sea and its resources. We feel indiscriminate naval build-ups tend to spread apprehension. Therefore, my delegation would urge restraint in naval activities. That means that the criteria for legitimate naval-security needs should be carefully formulated.

Our abiding support for the implementation of the Declaration of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace derives from our commitments to peaceful maritime activities. We shall continue our search for a stable Indian Ocean régime; the region should be neutral, demilitarized and denuclearized. Bangladesh believes that such a régime must be guaranteed through a collective security system so that upon the withdrawal of the great Powers their domination is not supplanted by any other form of domination that could destabilize the security of littoral and hinterland States. We hope that the

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

United Nations Conference on the Indian Ocean will take place in Colombo at an early date.

The United Nations has a large and expanded role to play in meeting the challenges of the new era of international disarmament efforts. In that context, may I add that Bangladesh will be eager to play a role in the expanded Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Such expansion, in our view, could be gradually achieved over a limited time-frame, while maintaining the balance of the Conference and thus enhancing its ability to function more effectively.

With the end of the cold war, the world is evaluating old security perceptions and doctrines. We are now in an era of understanding and cooperation. This is a historic opportunity that we must seize upon to make the world a safer place by reducing the arms race and thus reducing the colossal expenditures associated with it. The peace dividend to be derived from this should be devoted to the welfare of mankind, particularly to the growth of the economies of the developing world. Let us all give peace a chance. For its part, Bangladesh pledges its active support and cooperation to achieve that noble objective, which is the dream of us all.

Mr. ABDUL GHAFFAR (Bahrain) (interpretation from Arabic): I wish to extend the congratulations of the delegation of Bahrain to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. I also congratulate the other officers of the Committee on their election to their respective posts. I pledge the full cooperation of my delegation in the Committee's deliberations and wish you success in discharging the tasks entrusted to you.

International relations have witnessed important changes that followed upon one another over the past year and in the course of this year. One of the most prominent of those developments was the signing of the Charter of Paris for A New Europe by the leaders of 34 States of Europe and North America, within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. That officially rang down the curtain on the cold-war era with all its tensions, international and regional polarizations and arms race. There can be no doubt that these developments have had a positive effect in the field of disarmament.

In November 1990, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe was signed, and on 31 July 1991, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty was concluded between the United States and the Soviet Union, in addition to the two initiatives of the United States and the Soviet Union on nuclear weapons in September and October 1991. We welcome both initiatives and hope that they will be followed by an integrated programme for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons.

These positive developments in international relations make it imperative for the international community to redouble its efforts to maintain international peace and security. In the unanimous opinion of authorities on

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

law and politics, there are three complementary approaches to achieve this. The first is the approach of settling disputes by peaceful means. The second is the setting up of a system of collective security in which all peace-loving States would participate in order to ensure its universality and viability. The third is disarmament. Both the processes of peace and security are organically linked to disarmament. Indeed, it is impossible to achieve peace or security at either the regional or international levels without genuine disarmament, and in particular nuclear, chemical and biological disarmament. Here the creation of a zone in the Middle East free of weapons of mass destruction inevitably will be beneficial to the States of the region. We believe that we must rid the region of all nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

In his statement in the General Assembly, my country's Foreign Minister reaffirmed that conviction when he said:

"Today, we are even more resolved to achieve this goal [a zone free of weapons of mass destruction] because of our belief that international security is intrinsically linked to its regional constituents and our conviction that strengthening the security of the Middle East region by making it completely free of weapons of mass destruction will be a positive contribution to the maintenance of world peace."

(A/46/PV.18, p. 23)

Unquestionably, nuclear weapons continue to be an abiding concern in the Middle East, especially since there is every indication that Israel possesses approximately 300 nuclear bombs. We believe that the declaration of the nuclear-free zone in the Middle East should be based on renunciation by the

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

States of the region of the acquisition of nuclear weapons, in addition to strict rules and regulations that would govern the use of radioactive materials by the States of the region.

Security is of paramount importance to all countries, whether great or small. The small countries are particularly concerned because they are especially vulnerable to outside threats and aggression. In his report on protection and security for small States, the Secretary-General, in commenting on the views of members of the Security Council, said in this connection:

"Because of their intrinsic characteristics, small States may need a special measure of attention and support. Member States clearly acknowledged that the international community had a vested interest in safeguarding the security of small States, since the international order could be undermined by their instability or loss of security."

(A/46/339, p. 9)

The United Nations can play a major role in this respect, through the Security Council, where the security needs of small States should be studied. Of course, the best security guarantee would be the mutual respect by all States for the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, the United Nations Charter and international law.

Bahrain, as a member of this international forum, looks forward to further achievements in the area of disarmament so that the world may live in safety and in peace. At the same time, we support the consolidation of collective security within the framework of the United Nations through the prohibition of the use of force or the threat of the use of force. Past experience has made it abundantly clear that without an adequate system of

(Mr. Abdul Ghaffar, Bahrain)

deterrence, without proper respect for the sovereignty of States, especially small States, the system of world security would be threatened. We hope that world security will be consolidated through the elimination of the sources of tension in the world especially at the regional level and the achievement of lasting solutions to intractable political, economic and social problems.

Mr. JAYA (Brunei Darussalam): Speaking for the first time in this Committee, I should like first to extend to you, Sir, my delegation's warm congratulations on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that under your wise leadership the Committee will be able to accomplish its task successfully. Felicitations are also extended to the other officers of the Committee, whose dedication has contributed to the Committee's work.

We have recently witnessed significant changes affecting international events, which in many ways have transformed our thinking about the achievement of a secure and peaceful world. Against the backdrop of the end of East-West tension and the changes within the Soviet Union, we are achieving a much desired world-wide consensus regarding many important issues, notably those concerning disarmament.

The start of the so-called new world order has perhaps helped to remove some of the outward signs of long-term pessimism. Elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, along with key initiatives to bring arms under control and the reduction of nuclear armaments have begun to preoccupy the Committee in its deliberations.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

All those initiatives are very convincing but none is more welcome or appreciated by all of us than the recent announcements by President Bush and President Gorbachev of their intention to cancel and eliminate tactical nuclear weapons and some of their nuclear programmes. Brunei Darussalam welcomes these historic developments, together with the good response from those countries with nuclear weapons. My delegation believes that the commitment shown by those concerned will set a precedent for more efforts to accelerate progress on all disarmament agenda items.

With the growing concern over arms control and disarmament, Brunei Darussalam is anticipating that priority will be given to those arms which, in our belief, will have the most disastrous effect, not only on human lives, but also on the eventual destruction of our planet. In this connection my delegation stresses the point with regard to the proliferation of nuclear weapons: we believe that the international community, in particular the nuclear-weapon States, should be equally disposed towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, our hope to see the cessation of nuclear-weapon tests will not have positive results for as long as the nuclear-Power States continue to conduct nuclear-weapon tests. We have always held the view that further testing and research will not only produce more sophisticated nuclear weapons but will also undermine all hopes for arms control and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. It is also my country's wish not to see more nuclear weapons developed, and to achieve that wish it is only logical to ban nuclear testing on a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory scale. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee in 1992 to pursue an appropriate mandate towards a comprehensive nuclear-test ban.

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

As a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Brunei Darussalam is encouraged by recent developments and pleased to see that the non-proliferation Treaty has, slowly but surely, gained more ground. The intention of France, China and South Africa to become signatories to the Treaty does signify a positive development on this issue and is greatly welcomed by my country. In view of this development we urge those States, with or without nuclear-weapons capabilities, which have not acceded to the Treaty, to do so. This move by other non-party States will surely enable the international community to achieve what it seeks to accomplish, particularly progress towards the reduction of the risk of an outbreak of nuclear war and, consequently, the strengthening of peace and international security.

Brunei Darussalam is equally concerned about other problems which demand serious consideration. The threat of weapons of mass destruction will always prevail as long as constructive efforts for their elimination remain at a standstill. Like speakers before me, I should also like to repeat my country's calls for a speedy conclusion to the negotiations on an international convention on the prohibition of the use, manufacture and stockpiling of chemical weapons. We are convinced that the expected conclusion of the convention will contribute to the total elimination of other categories of weapons of mass destruction, especially chemical weapons.

Like other Member States, Brunei Darussalam also attaches great importance to the issue of biological weapons and is of the view that the production of such weapons of mass destruction should be halted. Our firm commitment with regard to the issue was enhanced when my country earlier this

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

year acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. This decision is also in line with Brunei Darussalam's own biological weapons Act, which is aimed at prohibiting the development, production, acquisition and possession of certain biological agents and toxins and of biological weapons. At this juncture we would also like to applaud the parties concerned, whose work and contribution have led to the successful conclusion of the Third Review Conference of the Parties to the biological weapons Convention held in Geneva recently. We hope that the decisions adopted will significantly contribute to the further strengthening of the Convention.

The maintenance of global peace and security is indeed of prime importance and remains essential to our survival. The cold war may be over but as past events have proved, it is the small, sovereign States that are most vulnerable to any act of aggression conducted by outside elements. It is undeniable that wide possession of arms and weapons of mass destruction through the unabated transfer of arms has indeed led to strong suspicion, hostilities and arms conflict. In this connection the United Nations study on ways and means of promoting transparency in international transfers of conventional arms should be welcomed. We also hold the view that the discussion on the establishment of an international arms transfer register under the auspices of the United Nations, and its implementation, should be based on the basic principle of universality and non-discrimination.

The end of ideological rivalry between the super-Powers and the beginning of international cooperation should augur well for the new thinking on

(Mr. Jaya, Brunei Darussalam)

disarmament. We believe that, with the encouragement and total support of Member States, the United Nations could play an extensive role in key security and disarmament issues. In our effort to build a future that is peaceful and to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, we therefore reiterate our stand that the United Nations is the principal body on which we rely for the maintenance of peace and security.

The meeting rose at 4.40 p.m.